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United States Government **Department of Energy**

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: November 28, 2005

REPLY TO ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-273-Red Mountain-White Bluffs Transmission Line)
Project #: V-P-06/01

TO: Bill Erickson
Natural Resource Specialist – TFP/Walla Walla

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management along the Red Mountain-White Bluffs 115 kV Transmission Line Corridor from Structure 1/1 to Structure 8/4.

Location: The project area is located in Benton County, Washington, being in the Walla Walla Region.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to clear unwanted tall growing, yard, windbreak and volunteer trees in the right-of-way and around tower structures that may impede the operation and maintenance of the subject transmission line. Also, trees from structure 6/15 to structure 6/17 are approaching the electrical clearance zones of the lines. BPA is clearing these trees to prevent them from falling or growing into the lines causing system outages. In addition, access road mowing will be conducted in selected portions of the right-of-way. BPA plans to conduct vegetation control with the goal of removing tall growing vegetation that is currently or will soon be a hazard to the transmission line. Vegetation that will grow tall will be selectively eliminated before it reaches a height or density to begin competing with low-growing species. Desirable low-growing plants will not be disturbed. Cut-stump or follow-up herbicide treatments on re-sprouting type species will be carried out to ensure that the roots are killed.

The width of the managed ROW easement is 90 feet. All work will be accomplished by selective and non-selective vegetation control methods to assure that there is little potential harm to non-target vegetation and to low-growing plants. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards. The work will provide system reliability.

Analysis: A Vegetation Management Checklist was completed for the project corridor in accordance with the requirements identified in the Bonneville Power Administration's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285).

The subject corridor traverses rural urban, agricultural and grazing lands.

Sections 3 of the checklists identify the natural resources present in the areas of the proposed work. The following summarizes natural resources occurring in the project areas along with applicable mitigation measures.

Water Resources: An unnamed irrigation canal, the McWhorter Canal, an irrigation reservoir, various isolated wetlands and the Yakima River have been identified along the project work corridor. No ground disturbing vegetation management methods will be implemented near these water bodies, minimizing the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation into these water bodies. All available herbicidal, manual and mechanical methods will be used for vegetation management. The following herbicide buffers will be implemented for the project. Outside a 100 foot buffer from any T&E listed stream, ponds or wetlands or a 35 foot buffer from any other stream, pond or wetland, Triclopyr BEE (common formulations. Garlon 4 and Tahoe 4E) may be applied. Formulations of Triclopry TEA (common formulations Garlon 3A and Tahoe 3A) may be applied for spot or localized applications up to one yard of the waters edge for T&E listed streams, ponds or wetlands or up to the waters edge of any other water body or sensitive habitat. For any initial or follow up broadcast treatment with Triclopry TEA on sprouting brush, a 35 foot buffer will be maintained from any stream, pond, wetland of sensitive areas. Other approved herbicides and buffers as reference in the project vegetation management checklist may also be used.

Besides the irrigation pumps drawing water from the irrigation canals and reservoirs, no other drinking water wells, irrigation wells or water supplies were identified along the right-of-way.

Threatened and Endangered Species/Essential Fish Habitat: Pursuant to its obligations under the Endangered Species Act, BPA has made a determination of whether its proposed project will have any effects on any listed species. A Species list was obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) web link on November 21, 2005 identifying threatened and endangered species potentially occurring in the Benton County project area. A determination of "No Effect" was made for all ESA listed species, designated critical habitat and Essential Fish Habitat for the project.

Cultural Resources: Tree removal or access road mowing will not affect cultural and historic resources. No soil disturbance will occur along the project corridor during this work. If any cultural resources are found during the work, work will cease until a BPA archeologist has been notified and direction given.

Re-Vegetation: If required, reseeding with native seeds will be accomplished using the mixes established in Section 5.2 of the checklist.

Monitoring: The entire project will be inspected during the work period. Additionally the line will be routinely patrolled after treatment to monitor the effectiveness of the treatment and any issues associated with the project.

Findings: This Supplement Analysis finds that (1) the proposed actions are substantially consistent with the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285) and ROD, and; (2) there are no new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed actions or their impacts. This Supplement Analysis also finds the proposed actions will not affect threatened or endangered species. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ James R. Meyer for
Ken Hutchinson
Environmental Scientist

CONCUR: */s/ Katherine S. Pierce* DATE: 11/30/05
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachments:
Vegetation Management Checklist
Species List
Effects Determination